



State of Wisconsin
2015 - 2016 LEGISLATURE

LRB-3727/2
CMH:emw&amn

2015 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 68

November 2, 2015 – Introduced by Senators MILLER and RISSER. Referred to
Committee on Senate Organization.

1 **Relating to:** the life and service of Eugene M. Roark.

2 Whereas, Eugene M. Roark was born on March 25, 1931, in Madison, Wisconsin
3 and died on October 24, 2015, in Madison, Wisconsin at the age of 84; and

4 Whereas, Gene Roark said, “We’re dependent on the environment. If we don’t
5 take care of it, it won’t be there for us or for our children and grandchildren,” and
6 dedicated his life to that pursuit; and

7 Whereas, Gene Roark graduated from the University of Wisconsin–Madison
8 and, in 1960, started working for the Information and Tourism Department in the
9 Wisconsin Conservation Department; and

10 Whereas, Gene Roark was the Director of Tourism for the Wisconsin
11 Department of Natural Resources from 1970 to 1975; and

12 Whereas, Gene Roark was one of the founding members of the Wisconsin
13 Chapter of The Nature Conservancy in 1960 and has served the conservancy as a
14 board member, board chairman, and active emeritus trustee; and

1 Whereas, Gene Roark and his fellow trustees launched some of what would
2 become the conservancy's most important projects in Wisconsin in the Baraboo Hills,
3 Chiwaukee Prairie, Door County, and northern Wisconsin; and

4 Whereas, Gene Roark has been an active and influential member of many
5 conservation organizations including the Madison Audubon Society, which he joined
6 as a teenager, the Natural Heritage Land Trust, Wisconsin Society for Ornithology,
7 Dane County Conservation League, Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association,
8 Wisconsin Wetlands Association, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, The Prairie
9 Enthusiasts, Gathering Waters Conservancy, and the Invasive Plants Association of
10 Wisconsin; and

11 Whereas, Gene Roark was inducted as a member of the Wisconsin Conservation
12 Hall of Fame in 2015 after serving on the board of the Wisconsin Conservation Hall
13 of Fame since 1990; and

14 Whereas, Gene Roark led by example by placing a conservation easement on 21
15 acres of land he, along with siblings Nancy and William, owned along Lake
16 Wisconsin in Columbia County in 2004 to protect the land and approximately 3,500
17 feet of shoreline from development, which is one of the largest undisturbed acreages
18 on Lake Wisconsin; and

19 Whereas, Gene Roark and his wife purchased 120 acres of old farmland and
20 woods in northern Richland County with the goal of increasing diversity on the
21 property, planted thousands of trees and maintained the property through timber
22 sales and regular deer hunting by family and friends, and planted prairie grasses
23 and native wildflowers in open areas to recreate presettlement plant communities,
24 while ensuring that the largest and most valuable trees remain; and

Whereas, Gene Roark has dedicated his life and public service to the land and its resources; Wisconsin's natural landscape would look vastly different without Gene's foresight, persistence, and leadership; and

Whereas, Gene will be especially missed by his wife of 62 years, Jean, sons David and Michael Roark, daughter-in-law Sally, grandchildren Rachael, Taylor, John, and Michael Andrew Roark, great-grandchildren Ilan and Emilia Roark, sister Nancy Roark, and brother William Roark; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That the members of the Wisconsin legislature commend the life and public service of Eugene M. Roark, mourn his passing, and extend their condolences to his family and friends; and, be it further

Resolved, That the senate chief clerk shall provide a copy of this joint resolution to Eugene M. Roark's wife, Jean, and their family.

(END)